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UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS

Opening Remarks
Ninth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the
Caribbean on Sustainable Development

14 April 2026, 8:30 am – 9:15 am
Santiago, Chile

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to join you at this Ninth Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

This Forum offers a timely opportunity to assess progress and renew our collective commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

We meet amid profound global uncertainty. Economic volatility, geopolitical tensions, climate impacts, and rising inequalities continue to place significant pressure on development prospects. The conflict in the Middle East has compounded these pressures, with the risk of creating a significant new shock to an already fragile global economy.

From sustained energy price spikes and market instability to disruptions in food security, tourism and remittance flows, these factors pose serious risks, particularly for countries with limited fiscal and monetary space and high debt burdens, to their ability to absorb shocks.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) financing gap now exceeds 4 trillion US dollars annually, and continues to widen, even as multilateral cooperation itself is under growing strain.

Latin America and the Caribbean faces persistent structural constraints, including high levels of inequality, heavy debt burdens, and increasing exposure to climate-related shocks.

Yet, the region has demonstrated leadership in advancing people-centred policies, including social protection, climate resilience and inclusive development strategies.

ECLAC has played a critical role in supporting these efforts by promoting regional cooperation and evidence-based policymaking. I commend its continued leadership in promoting sustainable development in the region.

This Forum provides an important opportunity to reflect on how these challenges are being addressed across the region, and to identify areas for further collective action.

Excellencies,

As we open this Forum, it is useful to situate our discussions within two major multilateral outcomes from 2025 and their relevance for this region: the Second World Summit for Social Development, held in Doha, and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Sevilla.

The Doha Summit was the largest global gathering on social development in decades. It helped re-anchor global attention on the centrality of social development amid a widening gap between aspirations and lived realities.

The Doha Political Declaration emphasized that ending poverty, expanding decent work, and advancing social inclusion are mutually reinforcing foundations of stability and growth.

The Declaration also underscores the importance of policy integration, climate action, and international financial reform, and the need for renewed multilateral commitment to address these interconnected challenges.

I will discuss in the outcomes and the follow-up of the Summit in more detail at a later session today.

In the meantime, I would like to highlight the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

At a time when global cooperation is under strain, the Sevilla Conference demonstrated that the international community can still come together to address shared development challenges.

The Sevilla Commitment provides a renewed global framework for financing sustainable development.

Specifically, it sets out ambitious actions across three strategic areas:

First, it puts forward concrete efforts to scale up investment for sustainable development, including increased multilateral development bank lending, mobilization of private capital, and stronger domestic resource mobilization.

Second, it addresses the debt and development crisis, with measures to support countries facing high debt burdens. This includes a proposed facility to help manage debt service pressures, facilitate debt swaps, and promote greater use of “pause clauses”.

It also launches a more inclusive sovereign debt architecture through an intergovernmental process at the UN, which will include a UN Dialogue on Debt and a borrower country platform. This pillar speaks directly to the fiscal constraints that limit social investment across much of this region.

Third, it advances reforms of the international financial architecture, including steps to enhance the voice and representation of developing countries and bolster the global financial safety net.

Taken together, these efforts aim to strengthen the global financial system to better support countries in pursuing inclusive and sustainable development.
Excellencies,

The true measure of success lies in translating these commitments into results. The 130 initiatives launched through the Sevilla Platform for Action show that coalitions are forming and that implementation is already underway.

Our Doha Solutions Platform for Social Development also registered over 100 proven initiatives from Governments and stakeholders that address social development challenges through innovative and transformative action.

At the regional level, forums such as these provide a vital space for dialogue, practical cooperation, and implementation of both the Doha Declaration and the Sevilla Commitment.

At the global level, national and regional advances will be reflected in the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-Up, which convenes next week in New York as the primary platform to review progress and advance implementation of the Sevilla Commitment.

Similarly, many of you participated in the recent session of the Commission for Social Development, the central mechanism for follow-up to the Second World Summits for Social Development.

Excellencies,

The Doha Declaration and the Sevilla Commitment constitute a mutually reinforcing agenda: one for people, and one for the financing they need to thrive.

Let us use this gathering to move from commitment to action.

I look forward to the rich discussions ahead and the concrete outcomes this Forum will help generate. The people of this region, and beyond, are counting on us to deliver.

Thank you!
